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A STUDY IN HUSBANDS.

BY MARION HARLAND, MRS. BURTON HARRISON, AND ELIZABETH
BISLAND.

I.

THE feminine reader of the symposium entitled, "*A Study in Wives*," at once seizes upon and is complacent over a feature that may escape the average reader of the other sex.

French, English, German, and Scandinavian writers give us therein a composite photograph of the Ideal Wife, in which the helpmeet of man shows clear and benign.

The Frenchwoman's "constant aim is to be interesting to her husband. She multiplies herself. In turn, she is his friend, his confidante, his partner in business, his chum." The English cotter's wife has "profoundest faith" in her "man," and sinks her own soul out of sight while toiling for him and the children she has borne unto him. The middle-class Briton's spouse is an indispensable appanage of his respectability. The German woman of mediæval, and of modern, times is typified in the pretty tale told by Bürger, and borrowed by Addison's *Spectator*, of the Weinsberg wives bearing their husbands upon their backs out of the surrendered city as "what was most precious to them." The fairest of the fair pictures sketched in the pleasing "Study" is that of the "beautiful personality" selected by the late Professor Boyesen as the representative matron of his beloved land. Hers was, we read, "an unflinching helpfulness which ever gave and gave, without thought of demanding anything in return." A part of this giving was the sympathetic hearkening to her lord's grumbling over family expenses, calming his irritability, and shielding their children from his censure.

This helpmeetness is the *motif* of the series of Ideals. By

frank recognition of man's dependence upon it for happiness and prosperity, the distinguished men to whom we owe the Study prove themselves both shrewd and generous. The Complementary Theory of the Sexes would seem to be held by them in sincerity of orthodoxy. We have no talk of substance and shadow. The boulder and moss, the oak and the vine, are not so much as hinted at. The *fin de siècle* sentimentalist has learned that moss does not comfort boulders, and that the clinging parasite saps the strength of the tree.

We have, therefore, no ground for complaint against tone or tenet of "*A Study in Wives*." If he who makes two blades of grass grow where but one grew before is a benefactor to the world, she who makes one good man better, one strong man stronger, serves her age well and should be thankful.

At a political dinner given in the South a little while ago, the regulation toast to women had a novel wording :

"The Ladies ! God bless them ! *Formerly our superiors—now our equals !*"

The caustic irony of the sentiment is subtle, yet we catch the undertone of a great truth. Acceptance of the "situation" may not be cordial, but acknowledgment of the equality for which battle has been done these many years is welcome, both to the radical and to the conservative wings of the Woman's Progress Party. The best and most sensible women in this and in other countries ask for nothing higher than to be rated as the peers of the best and most sensible men. He who admits his wife, *in very truth*, to this equal footing, has taken the first and most important degree in the School for Ideal Husbands. I give significant emphasis to the words "*in very truth*." If, in by-gone days, women's aims were low, their thoughts and ways frivolous, the vapid flattery of their "superiority" to their brothers had much to do with their contentment with actual inferiority to nobler and possible ideals.

A French *feuilletoniste* has written a sensational story of a wife who, grown weary of devotion she did not return, sang her husband to sleep, then heaped his couch and filled his room with his favorite hyacinths. The heavy odor of the flowers stupefied him into torpor from which he never awoke. Reverse the sexes, and we have a parable that needs no key. When the asphyxia is voluntary, and both parties to the contract of marriage are

victims, we have an illustration of Max O'Rell's witty fling at "couples who had been engaged for ten years and were still hoping to know something of one another." Cases are rare in which a bachelor, however practical, sets a correct estimate upon the woman he means to make his wife. The clarified vision that enables him to take a just account of stock presupposes the marriage ceremony.

He who brings his imagination down (or up) to the contemplation of his idol (which is "short" for ideal), as a partner, with equal rights, in the concern which we name "life," a collaborer whose "counsels"—to quote at second-hand from Tacitus—"are not to remain disregarded, nor her utterances undervalued"—so simplifies the marriage relation and strengthens the marriage bond that he may be reckoned an authority in causes hymeneal.

The recognized and established equality of husband and wife outdoes Prince Ahmed's pavilion in elasticity. In the shelter of the spreading wings the phrase that grates upon a just ear—"a kind husband"—is obsolete. A man may be kind to his dog, his horse, his groom, and to his poorer neighbor. If deficient in natural affection, he may even be a kind father. He can no more, in the ideal, that is, the true, marriage, be kind to his wife than the left lobe of the heart can patronize the right. Neither can he, although liberal-minded to a fault, be generous to one who is part and equal owner in all that he possesses.

Should he find fault with her, it is as he would censure his own words and actions. A fair index of healthful spiritual and mental growth is the divine self-dissatisfaction of the earnest soul. The Ideal Husband is not content to rise without taking all of himself with him. If love leads him to make the best of his wife, a sense of what is due to himself and consequently to her, urges him to help her to live up to this high standard.

I have known many women who educated their husbands, in the true sense of the *educere*, drawing out latent good and developing the finer qualities of mind and soul. I have known few men who had patience and faith enough to do more than accept their wives as they are, settling down into fatalistic resignation when judicial weighing finds them wanting. These things are so patent that the adage, "A man's wife makes or mars him," has no companion saw touching the training the wife gets from

the husband. David Copperfield is slow to learn that his Dora's education was finished before he married her. When the conviction gets hold of him he lets go with both hands the work of training her mind. When she pleads timidly to be allowed to hold his pens while he writes what is to make him famous, he sees nothing promising in the request, or in the wistful eyes that watch the flight of the quill over the paper.

Our Ideal Husband is quick to see, and tactful in following up opportunities to comfort and to uplift her whose more delicate physical organization must often place her at a seeming disadvantage. Lapses into irritability or depression, errors of judgment and taste, are not, in his sight, evidence that his marriage was a failure, or even a mistake. Like the brave, level-headed fellow he is, he reasons that the woman for whom he would have laid down his life in 1885, must be worth living for, and living with in 1895. At the worst—when the worst cannot be ignored—since the bond uniting them is a sacred obligation and for a lifetime, he can set his wits to work to see the lights of the picture and close his eyes to the shadows, or manfully endure the inevitable as he would bear any other incurable ill.

This is conjugal fidelity of the finest type. It should be needless in a Christian land to specify, as an essential qualification for the rôle of the *decent* husband, faithfulness to the letter of constancy to his espoused wife. To the believer in the absoluteness of the holiest of voluntary earthly relations, infidelity is practically impossible.

Flirtations many and easily-gained divorces have deadened popular conscience on this head. Insidious philosophizing upon spiritual affinities and the divine right of every heart to seek and claim the mate intended for it by heaven, have wrought wider evil by compounding a false conscience and passing it off for truth and right. "Who is to judge as to whom God hath joined together?" is the excuse for fickleness that few are honest enough to characterize justly. The man who is true to his higher nature sweeps these sophistries aside and sets steadfastly before him the fact that the woman he has sworn to love, honor, and cherish, is the one to whom belongs, while they both live, the first place in his affections.

The sentence is humdrum and commonplace beside the literature most affected by the sociologist of our day. It is, neverthe-

less, God's truth, and the principle it conveys lies at the base of, and informs wedded happiness. It is not true, as men (and women) of easy virtue affirm, that the wife who is kept in ignorance of her husband's infidelities, slight or flagrant, is none the worse for them. The purity and strength of the conjugal relation are impaired, however ingenious the concealment, and the injury done to the man's inner nature is incalculable. He who spake as never man spake condemned the unlawful desire of the eye and the heart in terms the erotic novelist would brand as coarse, and at which the neurotic essayist sneers as out-of-date asceticism.

Return to first principles of this stamp would be wholesome frost to social microbes and sentimental bacilli. The breach of a voluntary promise sworn to in God's name is perjury. The betrayal of a sacred trust is treachery. To take all and to give nothing in return is dishonesty. And our Ideal Husband is an honest and an honorable man.

In the details of every-day life, he is *reasonable*. It is easier to grumble at ever-increasing expenses than to shoulder cheerfully the heavier load consequent upon a growing family. When "Finn's low averages and Bertha's hoydenish behavior" (*vide* Professor Boyesen) wound paternal pride, and "Olaf's habit of tearing his clothes" pulls upon the paternal purse, it is clear to the masculine mind that somebody ought to be blamed. Upon the wife, as the motive power of the domestic machinery, is laid the onus of the cook's wastefulness, the chambermaid's impertinence, the butler's breakages. Women are so used to this vicarious chastisement that they flay their own consciences in good faith for the misdoings of their underlings. The house-mother holds herself individually accountable for every spoiled *entrée*; dusty corners are as the blot of crime upon her soul, and she repents in her prayers of her children's naughtiness as the direct result of maternal unfaithfulness.

When our reasonable man takes upon himself the blame of his clerk's negligence and his cashier's defalcation and his porter's drunkenness, then, and not until then, will he lay upon his wife's shoulders and heart the weight of another's sins and shortcomings.

The Ideal Husband, thus roughly outlined, is not an impossible He. Nor is the lantern of Diogenes, with a searchlight attach-

ment, needed to find him. He reigns as one of the allied sovereigns, in many an American home, the Abou Ben Adhem of the fireside who makes the millennium of love, peace, and justice a blessed probability.

MARION HARLAND.

II.

RECENTLY—since the fair American, upon her travels abroad, who smilingly confesses to the possession, at her home across the sea, of a congenial and attached husband, has become so common a feature of foreign society—the question continually recurs there, as to what manner of man is he who thus calmly submits to be forsaken by his helpmeet. The Frenchwoman, who still appears in public arm-in-arm with her spouse, lifts her mobile eyebrows in astonishment at the liberty conceded to a wandering wife. The Englishwoman, who expects to go abroad in company with her husband, or else to remain at home with him, is lost in a maze of speculation as to the true nature of the matrimonial tie in that wonderful young country oversea. It is said that the gracious lady who fills the throne and the hearts of Italy, has made open protest against the repeated presentation at her court of married American women whose husbands remain invisible. Indeed, in all old world society, like remonstrances are heard. “We see so much of your charming American women, and so little of your men,” is a common remark, frequently followed by the suggestion that the nebulous heads of these ambulant households must be either unpresentable, or lazy, or indifferent, or at least indulgent beyond a continental or insular imagination elsewhere. The American husband is considered in short, where the conventionalities of society have been longer established, either a myth or a miracle.

It would be a hopeless endeavor to try to persuade such critics to accept things American exactly as they are. They are not much moved when we patiently and persistently reiterate that the riddle is often solved by the fact that, in his brief holiday abroad, the American husband of the cultured class, chooses rather to avoid the people and functions of high society in which his wife has pleasure, in favor of such joys of travel as will refresh him bodily and mentally for months to follow; and that, his own vacation over, he returns to his desk in office or counting-

room generously glad to accord to his wife and family a longer experience in rest and recreation than he was able to permit himself.

Although this magnanimous being is hardly understood among the people of civilizations older than our own, he exists here; and to him is largely due the present efflorescence of American womanhood in the world's flower-gardens. But the motives that inspire him are not all the same. Every good American who creates for himself a family, is anxious to secure for its members the full measure of privileges attainable through whatever means he has, applied according to his understanding how to dispense them. And it is not difficult to convince him that, unless he wishes his wife and daughters to be surpassed in culture and in knowledge of the world by those of his neighbor or ally in affairs, he must at once put to their credit money for a long stay abroad. Then ensues the disruption of the body domestic so peculiar to our occidental households. It would be a captious commentator upon American characteristics who could suggest that separations of this nature are occasionally tempered to the forsaken one by a sense of relief. Let us rather imagine his hope of reunion blending with the trust that when "she" next comes home to her own country, she may possibly be satisfied to stay here.

A trait peculiar to the American husband that surely entitles him to a niche in the temple of ideality, is his heroic endurance of the summer break in the comfort of his home. When June comes, when torrid heat beats upon city pavements and even night's arrival long delayed does not suffice to quell the baking earth, our well-to-do man of affairs speeds the departure of his wife and family to some cool and covetable retreat, there to remain until Autumn makes town again tolerable in their eyes. For three months or more, it may be his lot to remain, when at home, in a howling waste of mosquito gauze and brown hollands, perfumed with anti-moth paper, in a habitation presided over by a grim and furtive care-taker, who views even the master's approach to his domicile with suspicion. During this ordeal his meals at a club or hotel may become a weariness to the soul; his favorite chairs and lamps and books may be inaccessible; his wardrobe may know scant care. Such a trial, to flesh and temper, is made light of by a bachelor fortified with youth and

an unsettled habit; but it is serious to the man of middle life who has known better days. The occasion for it—the tax put upon the health of women and children by the prolonged heat of our summers—might be ignored by one less habitually considerate and unselfish than the American husband. But this yearly hegira from town homes to the country is cheerfully submitted to by thousands pent in cities where affairs of toil confine them, who provide for their families delightful, luxurious, or at least comfortable resorts in the mountains or at the sea shore, in which they themselves can hope to share but rarely and for only short experiences.

One is inclined to think it is the habit of industry that keeps alive in the manly American bosom the reputed flame of gallantry toward the wife. Among us, it is the dawdlers, the money-spenders, who treat their own wives with off-hand civility, and bestow their graces upon the wives of other men. As our countryman ascends the ladder of gold into the high places of idle society, he generally models himself after the Englishman of a corresponding class who gives the whole world its cue in the enjoyment to be had from things material. And, as everybody knows, *that* shining exemplar does not concern himself overmuch with attendance upon one woman's whims! It is a maxim with him that, to kill time in yachting, shooting, hunting or travelling, as it should be done, a man must dispense with the impedimenta of inconvenient service to the fair. What a Fortunatus is he who can still the wifely implorings for companionship, by showering greenbacks upon her pathway, and coaxing her to find amusement that will dry her eyes of the tears shed upon his departure! But, naturally, the husband thus consoling, and the wife thus consoled, are not drawn more closely together by the transaction. Very soon, she has learned to entertain herself elsewhere than in his company, and the couple, who are nothing if not modish, are sundered. From such alliances are apt to come the stories of conjugal disaster that fill our newspapers and tingle in the ears of sober folk throughout the country. The curious part of it is that these people, like most American-born men and women, have a natural bent toward the placid pleasures of home and fireside, oftener than impulse of a baser sort that drives them to moral wreck.

In the same class of society—fortunately too small as yet to

be fairly cited as illustrating American characteristics, but which it is nevertheless the ardent ambition of many Americans to enter—we see other varieties of husbands who do not sustain our national boast of superiority in that particular article of social traffic, among them him who carries to pathetic lengths his willingness to give precedence to his wife. Insignificant of appearance, homely of origin, in manner ill at ease, without real zest for the pursuits of the life into which his pretty, ambitious wife has succeeded in conveying him, he is yet conscious of feeble-minded pride in his social advancement, and in the motor that has furnished it. Following her step by step into the *penetralia* of smart society, he presents, to his old friends and acquaintances of less pretentious aims, a laughable and yet a pitiable spectacle. Left to himself, among men of his own tastes and habits, he might still have laid claim to some slight individuality. As it is, he is swayed with every wind of passing fancy in fashion, is solemnized by his fear of making a mistake, is accepted at last as a necessary appendage of a charming woman, but is, as far and as often as possible, ignored or snubbed by the set she has forced him to enter. This absurd type is not uncommon here, and its transplantation—still in the wake of the clever and insinuating wife—into foreign soil does not improve the conception of American conjugal life in foreign minds.

Another manifestation in our day is a husband who, viewed from afar, would be taken for a high prize in the matrimonial market—an agreeable, successful man of affairs, who, having amassed a fortune, spends it lavishly; from whose wife or children nothing is withheld that can conduce to luxurious living, or lend brilliancy to the position at which he rates himself. In public, and in the visible relations of life, he is all good humor and indulgence. Men pronounce him a prince of good fellows, women smile at his approach, his employees radiate in his service, the public charities are in steady receipt of his bounty. But between him and the wife of his youth, the bride of his early poverty, the sharer of his struggle to rise, there is now a great gulf fixed. The greed for wealth, for place and prominence, the flatteries of the outside world, have filled the best spaces in his heart; and he has long outlived a sense of dependence upon her love or companionship. Her movements, her absence from or presence in

his home, are indifferent to him ; and the finding by her of interests and friends other than his own is a solace for which he will pay ungrudgingly in hard cash. How this couple began life in the old-fashioned, happy, humdrum American middle-class fashion, is distinctly remembered by others ; and the pity of it is that their wreck should occur when the port of life is just in sight. A little less worldly success might have steered them in safety to the end of the matrimonial voyage. But, whatever the cause, their separation is one of many that do not appear in the divorce courts.

The type of American husband most familiar among us, however, is the man of busy energies, kindly, affectionate, proud of his family, with whom he is free handed and sympathetic in their pleasures—who might, if the stress of making a livelihood would leave him free to do so, enjoy domestic life heartily, and aid in bringing the married state to be what good old Dicky Steele described it in the *The Tattler*—"a complication of all the pleasures of life, and a retreat from its inquietudes." But, alas ! under the conditions of modern money-grubbing, what opportunity has the poor man to cultivate fireside amenities and hang garlands upon the Lares of his hearth? In New York, for instance, he hurries away from home directly after eating a hasty breakfast, to return to it late in the day, fagged from the incessant and nervous grinding of the mill down-town, and ravening for his dinner. At such a moment, all the charms and all the virtues combined in one wife, often cannot win smiles or playful speech from any husband so beset; and a wise woman effaces herself until the post-prandial hour gives her a reasonable hope of claiming his conversation. At this period of the evening, unless she is a mere monger of nursery gossip or a household drudge, her spirit, braced and expanded by the day of independence and responsibility, is eager for the fray of ideas. She longs for the interchange of sentiment on current topics, while her heart (an organ among our wives apt to be fairly well stored with conjugal affection) owns to a little joyous thrill of satisfaction in the *tête-à-tête* that has lost nothing by years of repetition. To it, even the grown children are an interruption; and she sees them go their several ways in search of more active entertainment with almost a sigh of satisfaction ! What, at this interesting juncture, is the attitude of the ideal husband?

What, of the real husband? These are queries to be answered by observation or by experience!

If, critically regarded, the ordinary American husband is ever discovered to fall short of the high standard of consideration for his wife attributed to him by public voice, it seems to me it is in thinking that freedom and plenty of money to spend, without giving account of it, will take the place of his personal attentions to her. He should appear more with her in public; wear less of the air of a martyr led to the stake when in attendance on her before the world; and pay more heed at home to the trifling observances of convention and dress and manner that are so provokingly important to the happiness of most women. A very small show of effort, in the matter of externals and in courtesy of daily speech, will sometimes go to the heart of a wife, when a gift of value, or a concession of points in dispute between them, will leave it cold and untouched. The American wife, accustomed as she is to free range of thought and action, to admiration of her spirited achievements, to good humored indulgence of her "fads," does not, as a rule, receive from her husband the *petits soins* M. Max O'Rell speaks of about as distinguishing the manner of a French husband to his wife. Nor is she accustomed to seeing her spouse arise to open the door for her, as is the English wife. Trifles, light as air, are these no doubt; and not to be weighed in the balance against the fidelity, the generosity, the single-minded loyalty of our average American toward her he is pleased to style his better half. But one wonders, sometimes, if their absence does not account in a measure for the fact that she is so rarely a real half of her husband—if her extolled independence of attitude does not rob her of that dream of identity with him she once promised herself so fondly. For there is no appeal possible from a husband more inspiring to a wife than that for comradeship. If our women were to hear it oftener, perhaps there would be less said of the pursuit of "public works" that take the American wife over the borders of her home, outward bound.

CONSTANCE CARY HARRISON.

III.

SPEAKING historically, all evidence leads inevitably to the conclusion that the only entirely ideal husband ever known to exist was unfortunately cut off in the flower of his

youth, some time during the early years of the Pliocene Period. Minute fossil fragments of his bones have been discovered and are worn as relics by pious celibates ; they are even said to have worked miracles, but no record exists of a second avatar of this noble being, and the experience of wives gives no reason to hope that a sinful and unworthy world can ever hope for his reappearance.

Nevertheless, with that fine disregard ever shown by the sex for scientific facts and historical evidence, every woman begins her sentimental life with expectation unabated by the experience of others. The luminous aura surrounding her lover translates him at once to a simulacrum of that long dead, knightly saint, until the fierce light which beats upon the husband dissipates the mists of early love, and brings into view the unprepossessing traits of commonplace humanity.

As is the case with all legendary persons the outlines of the character of the ideal husband are vague. The charming vision that haunts the dreams of maidenhood is compounded all of passion and purity, of beauty and vigor, chivalry and grace. A Samson among men he willingly yields into her feeble hands the locks of his power. A creature of a volcanic passion which renders him indifferent to meals and superior to sleep, he can be moved to rapture by but one single specimen of the sex, and can live for ever upon the hope or memory of her tenderness. He combines with an easy mastery of all manly arts a delightful preference for reading poetry aloud beside the domestic hearth ; is superior to all vulgarly material considerations and is yet generous in the matter of diamonds, and, in a word, unites in one stalwart person all the virtues of Galahad, Launcelot, and Arthur.

The wife, perhaps—in moments of disgust with the crude masculinity of her mate—will permit herself to ponder an ideal who, while less magnificently ornamental than the gentle maiden's collection of romantic bric-a-brac—is yet, like the well recommended English butler, “thoroughly domesticated.” She dreams of a person prepared to throw himself with enthusiasm into the study of croup and measles, full of burning sympathy in the matter of female domestic service, and yet so full of tenderness and tact as to be able to instantly obliterate himself at moments of domestic crises. Like the aforementioned ideal servant he is never in the way and never out of it. He is uncritical of incompetence or failure, and unexactly fond ; unabsorbed by affairs

and yet commanding the secret of worldly success, and above all and before all he is constitutionally and hopelessly blind to the charms and virtues of any other woman than his wife.

Tastes may differ as to details, and according to temperament, nationality or social condition, but, broadly speaking, this pleasing person with his eccentric combination of qualities, figures in the abstract affections of all women.

But these, of course, are dreams—diversions of those exalted moments when the human moth allows itself with futile richness of imagination to think of the star as a possible companion. Practically what every woman hopes for and desires in her mate is that he should be a man. Not merely a person of the masculine sex, nor a creature of impossible and conflicting virtues, but one in whom the elements are so blended that within the strong circle of his virility she finds space to develop the best of all her possibilities.

Her ideal husband is no Galahad, but he retains so much of the tradition of knightliness as to keep a deep reverence for womanhood, which no bad women he may have known have been able to destroy; for this reverence of her sex she feels is her strongest incentive to right living.

Again, her ideal husband is distinctly a jealous husband, not, of course, to the point of being a vain, uneasy fool, but sufficiently so to prove to his wife that he values her—as much as his money, we will say, which he would surely not leave lying on the roadside to be snatched at by every passer by, and which he will freely incur inconvenience or even danger to defend. True, the law does not encourage this point of view. It permits him to kill the midnight burglar robbing him of his property, but denies him the same privilege in the case of the thief breaking into his home to steal his happiness. Despite the incongruities of the law the man whom the woman dreams of is red-blooded enough to be a physical terror to the sneaking invader of households. Indifference as to her fidelity argues it so valueless that she can not feel she defrauds him in not preserving it.

Her ideal husband regards her neither as mistress, chum, nor servant. Her motherhood raises her in his eyes above all three. She is something different from himself, the embodiment of his finer sentiments, his emotional life, and as such to be guarded

from the ruder side of existence, with something of the tender indulgent care given to a child with somewhat of the reverent consideration accorded by the laity to the priesthood. Nevertheless this nice person is not uxorious. While he assumes all the rougher share of life he is extremely exacting of her within her sphere, and demands the very best exertion of her powers. He is not content to be bundled into a hotel because she is too lazy or helpless to deal with domestic difficulties. He will not put up with cold and niggardly affection, with a neglected mind or person. All the treasures of heart and brain he demands in return for her exemption from the coarser cares of life. He even exacts that she shall be a good citizen as well as a good woman, and have public as well as private virtues. There is a theory that the patient, unexacting financial agent who is supposed to typify the genus husband in America—who like Charity suffereth long and is kind, thinketh no evil, and giveth all his goods—is woman's ideal of a mate, but this is a slander. The dull submission of the overlaid ass is not the quality which ordinarily excites feminine respect. That brilliant, greedy figure, hung with jewels, who stands aloft in the social car laying the goad upon the bowed shoulders of the humble, overworked married slave who draws her chariot, is purely a figment, evolved out of the note books of shallow foreigners rushing express through the country to make a volume of travels. In reality the American husband is the most exacting of his kind. He demands gaiety, physical and mental charm, a high cultivation of all her powers and an infinity of carefully performed duties from his wife. If the American woman is brilliant and ornamental, it is because the American husband will put up with nothing less. In older civilizations woman finds in married life all the conditions prepared for her; rules made which she has only to obey, a careful code of precedents which she has only to follow. Here a woman may be within a period of seven days transported from a country boarding school to the most conspicuous position in the land, and without previous training be called upon to receive ambassadors and preside at state dinners. The husband who elevates his wife from the wash-tub in a mining camp to the palace of a millionaire, expects her to create out of the chaos of her previous experiences an ordered social world between the morning and the evening of her first day of wealth—and she does it and likes it,

and loudly proclaims that this exacting creature is the most delightful example of husband known.

Curiously enough the real person is as unlike as possible to the generally-accepted picture of the typical American husband, with his narrow, sordid, bank-clerk soul, his neglected mind, and his cynical estimate of woman as a fantastic child with an insane lust for luxury. Perhaps the typical husbands of other nations have been as much belied, and the Frenchman is not the sensualist who thrusts the woman's pretty babies from her arms into alien hands in order that her attentions may not for a moment be distracted from himself, nor her labors diverted from his business. Perhaps the German wife is not really an unpaid, contemptuously-treated upper servant, nor the English woman the victim of a selfish, domineering master. At all events but few women find all the unpleasing characteristics of the type combined in their individual specimens of the national husband.

In a recent number of this REVIEW a most interesting "Study in Wives," from the point of view of men of four different nationalities, showed—allowing for the variation of national temperament—a strong unanimity as to the character of the ideal wife. The writer of the last paper, while making a touchingly beautiful tribute to one of these noble souls—whom one was allowed to infer was his own mother—cannot refrain from a fling at the "New Woman." No discussion of any phase of the relations of the sexes is now complete without allusion to that female spectre from whose antics modern man is continually rushing weeping into the arms of the reading public to claim its sympathy and protection. It is evident that the ideal husband is not the mate for her. . . . "I cannot conceive what kind of a wife she would make, because I cannot conceive of the kind of man who would marry her."

Poor new woman ! Let it be admitted that she is not a pleasing object—fails of being an attractive woman, and does not succeed in becoming an admirable man—is neither fish, flesh nor good red herring ; but the ideal husband can lay his hand upon his heart and truthfully maintain that he is not responsible for her existence ; he had nothing to do with her paternity. Her father is quite a different sort of being ; he wanders to and fro in the land bemoaning the decadence of the old-fashioned woman, and bewailing the loss of his ancient prestige in feminine eyes.

We heard no complaints from him some generation or more ago, when he first began to shift the burden of life upon the shoulders of his women. He thought there was something very noble in their desire for independence, their wish to relieve him of responsibility. Alas ! after a decade or two, these women who had accepted men's duties began to demand a share of his privileges as well, and suddenly all those bright angelic traits assumed the outlines of a hybrid monster, and he raised a loud alarm, which only increases in hysterical intensity as her demands grow more comprehensive.

The ideal husband has no part in this disturbance. His wife has no desire to become liberated, nor to develop her individuality, beyond the limits of his life. Did any one ever see an honored priestess wish to leave her shrine to become a washerwoman ? The wife of the good man finds no restriction of her liberty in marriage, no lack of freedom to do all the good work of any kind for which she has capacity. It is the selfish, inferior man who falls below the ideal who is responsible for the unpleasant developments in modern woman. She finds a strong, if unexpressed, sentiment in the family now that the girls upon reaching maturity must follow the boys into the world and assume their own support. The brothers decline to be hampered in the struggle for life by their sisters, and even a large moiety of the modern husbands are active in their encouragement of their wife's efforts to help gain the daily bread. No wonder that the woman finding herself forced to work insists upon having room to do it in.

The ancient patriarchal system may have been tyrannical in some of its features, but at least the males, under the system, were men and protected and provided for their women, who freely gave them submission and affection in return. In India reformers find the gravest opposition from the very women whose condition they are anxious to ameliorate. They fear to see the overthrow of a system which provides—even under tyrannous conditions—a home and a protector for every one of their sex.

Far above and removed from all this *tu quoque* of the sexes, this clamor of conflicting tongues, stands the good man, who is also the ideal husband—the sweetest hope of every woman, the perfect happiness of the one who finds him.

ELIZABETH BISLAND.